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Summary record of the 18th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 7 December 2016, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*)

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (A/71/365/Add.4 and A/71/595/Add.4)

United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (A/71/365/Add.5 and A/71/595/Add.5)

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (A/71/365/Add.4), said that the strategic priorities of UNAMA were based on Security Council resolution 2274 (2016), in which the Council had decided to extend the mandate of the Mission until 17 March 2017. Afghanistan continued to face significant political, security and economic challenges, which were expected to last into 2017. The proposed resource requirements for UNAMA amounted to $170 million, reflecting a net decrease of $13 million compared with the resources approved for the Mission for 2016. The overall decrease resulted mainly from the proposed net reduction of 57 civilian positions and decreased requirements for operational costs.

2. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (A/71/365/Add.5), she said that the Security Council, by its resolution 2299 (2016), had extended the Mission's mandate until 31 July 2017, and had decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and UNAMI should continue to pursue their mandate as stipulated in resolution 2233 (2015). The Council had also emphasized the importance of efforts to support the country's stabilization and long-term sustainable development, particularly in areas liberated from Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition, the Council had stressed the importance of advancing political dialogue and national reconciliation. Accordingly, the Mission had continued its engagement with Government officials, parliamentarians, political parties, civil society and religious and community leaders to find sustainable solutions with regard to the post-ISIL period and to promote inclusive political dialogue as well as national reconciliation. The requirements for UNAMI for 2017 amounted to $117 million, a decrease of $2 million from 2016. The staffing requirements amounted to 858 civilian staff positions, a reduction of 15 positions.

3. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for UNAMA (A/71/595/Add.4), said that, while the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the staffing resources requested for UNAMA for 2017, it was concerned about the high number of loan arrangements in that Mission and regretted that the necessary adjustments to the staffing table had not been made on an annual basis within the context of the budget process, given the long-standing existence of many temporary positions, and that those movements of staff had not been reported for an extensive period of time. It also regretted that the relevant intergovernmental bodies had not been made aware of the actual deployments of staff and, as a result, had examined staffing tables that did not reflect the actual deployments. The Advisory Committee trusted that the Secretary-General would follow established rules and practices for proposed staffing adjustments in future budget proposals.

4. Regarding operational costs, the Advisory Committee reiterated its request that detailed information relating to the resource requirements in respect of security services should be included in future budget submissions for UNAMA and that the Mission should build and use its in-house capacity rather than rely on external consultants. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended a 10 per cent reduction in consultancy resources. In terms of the Mission's environmental footprint, the Advisory Committee welcomed the solar power initiative and recommended that the Secretary-General should provide a cost-benefit analysis of the project.

5. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the proposed resource requirements for 2017 for UNAMI (A/71/595/Add.5), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal for the Mission but reiterated that the Secretary-General should undertake efforts to strengthen the Mission's national staffing complement, whenever appropriate, by nationalizing positions. The Advisory Committee had been informed that the reductions proposed for 2017 for security staffing would affect the ability of UNAMI to conduct security-related field activities and that it might therefore be advisable to reinstate some security positions in the Mission's budget. On other hand, it had also been

informed that the vacancies of 18 months or more of five security-related positions had not affected the work of maintaining the security of the Mission and its personnel in the current security situation. The Advisory Committee trusted that that apparent contradiction would be clarified further to the Assembly at the time of its consideration of the Advisory Committee's report.

6. **Mr. Alawi** (Iraq) said that special political missions played an important role in achieving the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and his delegation appreciated the financial contributions made by Member States in support of those missions, especially UNAMI. The Government of Iraq fully supported UNAMI in carrying out its mandated tasks and would continue to provide the Mission with the best possible services.

7. Every special political mission had its own specificities, which were reflected in the mandates established by the Security Council following consultations with Governments to ensure respect for the sovereignty of States and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs. His delegation welcomed the support given by the Mission to assist Iraq in promoting democratization and human rights, establishing political dialogue and a national reconciliation process, conducting a national census, fostering friendly relations with its neighbours, and implementing judicial reforms.

8. UNAMI was working with United Nations humanitarian agencies to assist Iraqis who had fled their regions as a result of the campaign launched by ISIL, and with the United Nations country team to ensure a regional response to the Syrian refugee crisis. The Mission must be provided with adequate human and financial resources, and any reductions would undermine its efforts. The proposed $117.43 million in resource requirements for 2017 represented a $2 million decrease compared with 2016, and that proposal should be reviewed. Any unjustified abolishment of necessary posts would also undermine the Mission's work and the proposal for a net decrease of 15 posts should therefore also be reviewed.

Agenda item 149: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations

Review of the United Nations Office to the African Union (A/71/551 and A/71/646)

9. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) (A/71/551), said that, since the establishment of UNOAU in July 2010, its mandate had grown in scope, volume and complexity. As a result, its role and relations with the African Union had been the subject of several reviews since 2013. Some of the findings had included recommendations to redefine strategic priorities to strengthen political cooperation and enhance institutional and operational partnership with the African Union.

10. The proposed restructuring would provide the Office with the necessary resources and organizational structure to meet the demands placed on the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, including better integration of the political, operational and support functions of the Office. The current proposals did not give rise to net additional resource requirements under the 2016/17 approved budget of the support account or the approved programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

11. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/646), said that the Secretary-General proposed to restructure UNOAU by establishing 3 additional posts (two D-1 and one National Professional Officer); abolishing 5 posts; redeploying 4 posts; and reassigning 15 posts. Having considered the functions of the proposed posts, the Advisory Committee was of the view that the functions of the Chief of Staff could be performed by the Deputy Head of Office, and it therefore recommended against the proposed D-1 Chief of Staff. It recommended approval of the other proposed post changes.

12. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group attached great importance to the strengthening of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, particularly in the areas of peace and security in Africa, including the work of UNOAU. It fully supported the Secretary-General's proposal on the restructuring of UNOAU, which was aimed at strengthening and reorganizing human resources in the Office in order to enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union by better integrating the political affairs and the institutional and operational partnership pillars of the Office with a view to improving mandate delivery.

13. Noting that the proposed revised structure would involve a reorganization of the Mission support and administrative components as well as the establishment of the Institutional and Operational Partnership Service

to lead the Operational Planning and Advisory Section and the Mission Support Planning Section, she said that the Group would welcome further information on how the proposed staffing structure would strengthen the coordination and management of the Office, including its advisory and operational role in relation to engagement with the African Union.

14. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union was central to the realization of peace and security. Greater strategic political coherence between the two organizations in conflict prevention and resolution and the sustainability of peace in the region was vital, and more could be done to further enhance their relationship in the areas of peace and development. Development was crucial to ensuring peace and security and achieving the goals set out in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations and the African Union had their respective comparative advantages, and their strategic partnership should be enhanced through closer collaboration, including joint actions to address global peace, security and development challenges.

15. The Group welcomed the significant progress made in the collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union in recent years, including the establishment of an overarching framework on enhancing partnership in peace and security. The partnership should develop into a systematic, harmonized and strategic one, including through predictable funding for the peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council and led by the African Union. The Group encouraged the United Nations to continue to coordinate closely with the African Union Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council in areas such as mediation, peacebuilding, capacity-building, operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture and implementing Agenda 2063.

16. With regard to the proposal to strengthen UNOAU and improve the delivery of mandates by restructuring human resources, the Group would welcome further information on the role and functions of the proposed human resources and the work of the proposed Institutional and Operational Partnership Service and Mission Support Planning Section. The Group would also be interested to learn how the proposal would enhance the partnership with the African Union in the area of peace and security and provide coordinated and consistent United Nations support to the African Union on both long-term institutional capacity-building and short-term operational support matters.

17. The continuously evolving partnership with the African Union on issues of peace and security to address threats on the continent called for further strengthening of the capacity of UNOAU to manage the strategic and operational relationship. The Group therefore fully supported the restructuring of the Office and would engage constructively in discussions on that item in order to achieve a positive outcome in a timely manner.

Agenda item 115: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(b) Appointment of members of the Committee on Contributions (*continued*) (A/71/102/Rev.1/Add.1)

18. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to the note by the Secretary-General (A/71/102/Rev.1/Add.1) referring to decision 71/406 of the General Assembly, by which the Assembly had appointed five members to the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2017 and had postponed to a later date the appointment of one member to fill the remaining vacancy. In the same note, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly that the Government of Gabon had nominated Mr. Ndong Ella (Gabon) to fill the vacancy in the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2017 and that the candidature had been endorsed by the Group of African States. He took it that the Committee wished to recommend the candidate's appointment by acclamation.

19. *Mr. Ndong Ella (Gabon), for the African States, was recommended by acclamation for appointment to the Committee on Contributions for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 2017.*

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.